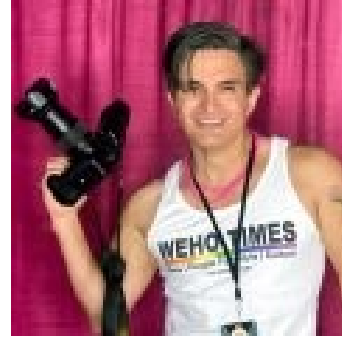


WeHo Times: HISTORICAL WEHO

Check Out these Keith Haring Sculptures on Santa Monica Blvd. – 1998 by Paulo Murillo

July 5, 2018



All exhibit photographs by Brian A. Smith, D.C. ©1999

Here's a throwback to historical West Hollywood circa 1998, when Keith Haring sculptures were on display at the median along Santa Monica Boulevard, during a time when thick green lawns and trees stretched down the middle of the boulevard.

WEHO TIMES reader Dr. Brian A. Smith shared these photos with us, which he believes were shot in 1999. Smith was a West Hollywood resident in the 1980s – 2000s. He had an office at 8235 Santa Monica Blvd and Harper. He has a lot of fond memories of West Hollywood during those days. He recalls seeing the glass elevator of his office building in a gay pornographic movie shot in the early to mid-80s. There was a porn company was on the 3rd floor of his building at that time.

"My WeHo days go back to the Four-Star Saloon with their great Sunday brunch—Four-Star became Mickey's—and the Blue Parrot on the corner, later Revolver, as well as MoLo [Mother Load] and Studio One with a country/western bar on the first floor on the west side of town. On the east side there was the dance club, I think it was called 'On the Boulevard' which had a Country Western bar in the back. I want to call it Silver Star but I'm not sure. That place became a 2nd-hand shop I think. And all the small places – Spike, spent too many Sunday mornings after Probe there, Rafters, a man-for-hire place on the north side of SaMo by Fairfax, I think. Apache was my Sat nite hangout in the '80s – same owners as Mickey's. They also had the Apache West on the westside and the Comanche down in Long Beach."

According to a Keith Haring biography and timeline found in Luna Nueva Gallery, the Keith Haring Sculptures went up in West Hollywood in 1998. There were 10 pieces in all. Nine sculptures were lined along Santa Monica Boulevard and the 10th sculpture is believed to have been by the Pacific Design Center on San Vicente.

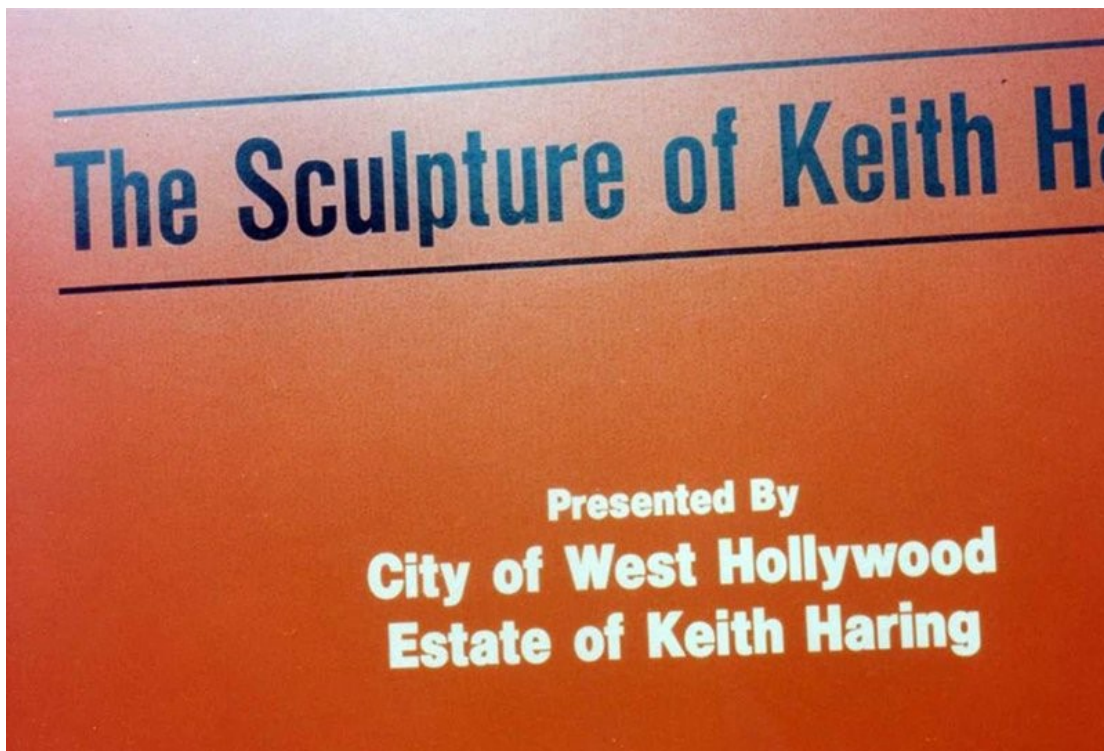
All exhibit photographs by Brian A. Smith, D.C. ©1999

Dr. Smith captured nine of the ten Keith Haring sculptures on Santa Monica Boulevard.

“If I recall correctly, the plaque was at the west end of SaMo [Santa Monica Boulevard] on the BH [Beverly Hills] border, with these 9 pieces lined up. We can probably figure out their location from the buildings in the background.”

Current West Hollywood Arts manager Andrew Campbell reveals that the City of West Hollywood partnered with San Francisco to share the cost of shipping the sculptures to the West Coast. According to old staff reports, the sculptures went to San Francisco first, before they ended up in West Hollywood and then back in New York. The cost to feature the sculptures was \$140,000, but it was split between SF and WeHo, so the price was between \$60,000 and \$70,000. The Convention Visitor’s Bureau, which morphed into West Hollywood Travel and Tourism contributed \$25,000 towards it. The city contributed \$20,000 towards it through its Public Art Beautification Fund. Campbell says it is unclear where the rest of the money was raised. It is possible funds came through a Keith Haring Foundation.

Keith Allen Haring’s pop art and graffiti-like work grew out of the New York City street culture of the 1980s. His work grew to popularity from his spontaneous drawings in New York City subways – chalk outlines on blank black advertising-space backgrounds – depicting radiant babies, flying saucers, and deified dogs. After public recognition he created larger scale works such as colorful murals, many of them commissioned. His imagery has become a widely recognized visual language. His later work often addressed political and societal themes – especially homosexuality and AIDS – through his own iconography. He died on February 16, 1990.











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